

THE memory of Lord Kelvin, the man who more than anyone else was responsible for the introduction of submarine cables, was honoured on 26 June—the 140th anniversary of his birth—at ceremonies held in London and Detroit.

Speaking in London, Sir Albert Mumford, KBE, Engineer-in-Chief of the Post Office, appropriately reminded his audience that his tribute to a great man was being carried to the United States by means of submarine telephone cable.

To Lord Kelvin, son of a professor of mathematics at Glasgow University, the world owed many of the most significant advances in electrical engineering and in refrigeration. Entering Glasgow University at the age of 11, he was awarded the University Medal for his essay on "The Figure of the Earth" and contributed to the Cambridge Mathematical Journal before he reached 16.

Lord Kelvin, a man of genius, had 56 patents credited to him by 1900. He developed the basis for the absolute scale of temperature which now bears his name and proposed the sudden expansion of compressed air as a possible method of producing cooling effects, for use particularly for refrigeration.



Lord Kelvin, inventor, scholar, musician and oarsman whose ideas gave birth to submarine cables.

A Man of Genius

He then turned his attention to the making and laying of submarine telegraph cables and in 1857 joined the Board of the newly-formed Atlantic Telegraph Company whose object was to link Ireland and Newfoundland by a submarine telegraph cable. When the cable was laid in 1858, Kelvin sailed aboard the *Agamemnon* as an unpaid electrician. The cable failed after some ten weeks, but this was no reflection on Kelvin. It was entirely due to him that the more successful cables of 1865 and 1866 were laid. The mirror galvanometer and the syphon recorder which he patented in 1867 were devised to respond more readily to the very feeble signalling current.

Later, Lord Kelvin made many improvements to the mariner's compass and invented a new method of taking soundings in shallow and deep

water, a tide gauge, a tide predictor and a tidal harmonic analyser. Even in his last years he was still interested in all aspects of current scientific research and wrote on various aspects of atomic theory and on the new electron theory.

Lord Kelvin, who died in 1907 and was buried in Westminster Abbey, was nothing if not versatile. He rowed for his college at Cambridge; helped to found the Cambridge University Musical Society, himself playing the french horn in the orchestra; and was very well versed in the classics, often quoting from Latin and Greek authors.

It was appropriate that Sir Albert Mumford, who is President of the Institution of Electrical Engineers, should have paid this tribute to a brilliant man. Lord Kelvin was President of the Institution in 1874, 1889 and 1907.